

M. L. D. Putnam

ISSN 0003-4827

Material in the public domain. No restrictions on use.



This work has been identified with a [Creative Commons Public Domain Mark 1.0](https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/).

Recommended Citation

"M. L. D. Putnam." *The Annals of Iowa* 6 (1903), 156-157.

Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0003-4827.4574>

Hosted by [Iowa Research Online](#)

the most brilliant among the many noted men who have been counted a part of this community. His natural ability was supplemented by an excellent education and years of study and training. There was an alertness, a keenness about his work as a lawyer which made him a dangerous opponent and gave him high standing before the bar. He was an orator of more than average ability, and a writer of strength and gracefulness, as many passages in a book he published a few months ago, 'John Williamson, of Hardscrabble,' will attest. Withal, he was a most genial and accomplished man, and a delightful social companion."

EUGENE CRISS was born in Preston county, Va., now West Va., July 27, 1822; he died at Sac City, Iowa, March 11, 1903. He resided a number of years in Illinois and Wisconsin, but in 1835, in company with John Coe, started to find a site in western Iowa where he intended to engage in milling and merchandizing. August 9 of that year they reached the present site of Sac City. The location pleased him, and he decided to settle by the 'Coon river, and help build up the city. At that time land had not yet been surveyed into sections, and no homestead entries had been made, but on July 4, 1854, Hon. John F. Duncombe had platted the town site of Sac City, which he had named Austin, in honor of one of the first settlers. After Mr. Criss' arrival it was changed to Sac City. From time immemorial that had been a summer camping ground for the Indians, and they continued to come there several years after Mr. Criss made his settlement. For a time his trade was largely carried on through the purchase of furs from the Indians and white settlers. These he hauled to Keokuk to be exchanged for supplies for his frontier store. His first residence was a log cabin, where with true frontier hospitality he always gave food and shelter to strangers who were traveling through this western country. Later on his residence was enlarged and became a station on the stage route from Fort Dodge to Sioux City. In 1856 he built a steam saw mill which furnished much of the lumber used thereabouts in pioneer building. He afterwards erected a flouring mill, and engaged also in farming and stock raising. He was one of the organizers of the first National Bank of Sac City, and was one of its directors and its vice-president at the time of his death. He served as county supervisor and also as county judge. In 1868 he represented Sac, Ida and Woodbury counties in the Iowa house of representatives. When his town was incorporated in 1875 he became its first mayor. In the early and later history of Sac county no one of the old pioneers bore a more prominent or useful part. He had a wide acquaintance and his name was a familiar one throughout the State. *The Sac Sun* of March 12, concluded its highly complimentary notice of Judge Criss with these words: "Judge Criss has been an excellent citizen, upright in his dealings, firm in his convictions, hospitable, and public spirited. No one in the county has been more widely known, and they who mourn his death are many."

MRS. M. L. D. PUTNAM was born at Greencastle, Pa., Sept. 23, 1832; she died at Davenport, Iowa, Feb. 20, 1903. Her father was Joseph Duncan, a member of Congress from Illinois at the time of her birth. Mr. Duncan's home was Jacksonville, Ill., but the lady members of the family were driven to Greencastle, Pa., by the prevalence of cholera at the national capital, and it was during their temporary residence there that she was born. Her father became the fifth governor of Illinois. He had distinguished himself by his services in the war of 1812, and received from congress a sword of honor. He had also, while a member of the Illinois legislature, been a leader in the pioneer effort to establish common schools in that state. On her mother's side Mrs. Putnam was a great-granddaughter of Hannah Caldwell, the one woman who was killed by British bullets during the war of the revolution.

She was married to Charles E. Putnam, of Saratoga Springs, N. Y., Dec. 9, 1854. The young couple came directly to Davenport, which was thenceforward their home. While Mrs. Putnam was especially distinguished in the society of that thriving city, and well known throughout the country, the great work of her life was the building up of the Davenport Academy of Sciences. In this she was especially aided by her husband and her distinguished son, Joseph Duncan Putnam, who died in 1881, at the early age of 26. This accomplished young Iowan had already won a national reputation by his original discoveries in natural history. After these two deaths Mrs. Putnam gave her great energies to the work of developing the scheme of the academy and increasing its museum collections. It was stated a dozen years ago that it already possessed one of the six largest ethnological and archaeological collections in the United States, and yet she pushed forward its work with all the unflagging zeal of earlier days. A large volume would be required to tell the story of this exceptionally useful and beautiful life. She was a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the highest honor which it confers. She rendered important services in behalf of the sick and wounded Iowa soldiers during the civil war. *The Davenport Democrat* of Feb. 22, 1903, contained an exhaustive and most thoroughly appreciative sketch of her long and useful career.

WILLIAM CHRISTY was born in Trumbell county, Ohio, Feb. 14, 1841; he died late in March, 1903, at Phoenix, Arizona. He came with his family to Osceola, Iowa, when he was fourteen years of age. At seventeen we find him engaged in teaching school, and at twenty he entered the Union army as a private in Company I, Fifteenth Iowa Infantry, under Col. W. W. Belknap. He was afterwards promoted to second lieutenant of Co. D, Eighth Iowa Cavalry. He participated in the battles of Shiloh and Corinth, and was four times wounded while leading a cavalry charge at Jonesborough, Tenn. He was captured at the battle of Lovejoy Station, Ga., and remained several months as a prisoner within the Confederate lines. He was promoted to a captaincy and at the close of the war was mustered out as lieutenant-colonel. After his military service he entered a business college in which he later on became a teacher. Returning to Osceola, he was elected treasurer of the State in 1872, and re-elected two years later. Upon retiring from this office he was elected cashier of the Merchants National Bank of Des Moines, which institution he had helped to organize. The following year he was compelled by ill health to resign, when he took up his residence at Prescott, Arizona. A year and a half later he removed to the vicinity of Phoenix, which became his home. He entered largely into the business of stock raising, fruit growing and banking. He first discovered that citrus fruits could be grown successfully in that region, and he and his brother also first introduced shorthorn cattle into the Salt River Valley. He was deeply interested in irrigation. His business operations were deemed of the highest importance to Arizona. On the day of his funeral the governor ordered the flag to be placed at half mast, and many other tributes were paid to the dead soldier and man of affairs.

CYRUS SMITH was born in North Charleston, N. H., July 12, 1834; he died at Webster City, Iowa, June 14, 1903. After the usual farm labors and country schooling, he left his New England home at the age of seventeen years, to carve out his own fortune in the west. He stopped awhile at Rockton, Ill., and afterwards in Dubuque, where he labored as a clerk in mercantile establishments. In 1855 he migrated to Webster City, Iowa, which afterwards became the shire town of Hamilton county. He opened the first store in that town and became the first postmaster, the appointment being made by President Franklin Pierce. Upon the organization

Copyright of *Annals of Iowa* is the property of State of Iowa, by & through the State Historical Society of Iowa and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.